

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life

Held on January 28, 2011

Loyola AD-210, 10 am

PRESENT: Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Dr. Catherine Bolton, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Ms. Anna Chigogidze, Ms. Melanie Drew, Ms. Laura Gallo, Mr. Daniel Houde, Ms. Dubravka Kapa (on behalf of Mr. Gerald Beasley), Ms. Heather Lucas, Mr. Howard Magonet, Dr. Lata Narayanan, Ms. Holly Nazar, Ms. Tanya Poletti, Ms. Morgan Pudwell, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Ms. Katherine Hedrich, Ms. Dale Robinson, Mr. Adrien Severyns.

ABSENT: Ms. Johanne De Cubellis, Mr. Steve Houde (on behalf of Mr. Jacques Lachance), Mr. Abdullah Husen, Mr. Ramy Khoriaty, Ms. Taylor Knott, Ms. Teresa Seminara.

GUESTS: Mr. Terry Too, Mr. Roddy Doucet.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. The Chair pointed out that "Communication & Awareness Raising of the Student Services Sector" would precede "Business Arising from the Minutes" on the agenda in order to accommodate to the guests that were attending the meeting.

Ms. Drew moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Magonet seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair noted that the CCSL meeting of March 4, 2011 will be changed due to several conflicts in schedules. The next meeting will likely take place on March 11, 2011, however Ms. Broad will send an email to all the Council members to confirm the new date and location.

The Chair reminded the Council of the following upcoming deadlines: the CCSL Special Projects application deadline of February 4, 2011 at 5pm; and the CCSL & CUVI Awards nomination deadline of February 18, 2011 at 5pm.

The Chair recalled recent and upcoming events at the university. In December 2010 the Multi-faith Chaplaincy, in association with the Dean of Students Office, held the Holidays Around the World celebration in the Loyola Chapel. There will hopefully be a spring festival as well. The Concordia Caribbean Student Union (CCSU) held a fundraiser on January 21, 2011 at the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall. It was a huge success, enjoyed by many. The "We Value Loyola On Ice" winter carnival will be taking place at the Loyola campus the week of February 1, 2011, with special activities happening each day. There have been two open forums to get feedback from students, staff and faculty regarding access to water at the university. The Chair encouraged everyone to go to the Sustainable Concordia website to give their comments and suggestions on the topic.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 26, 2010

Ms. Lucas moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of November 26, 2010 and Ms. Stanbra seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMUNICATION & AWARENESS RAISING OF THE STUDENT SERVICES SECTOR

4.1 Students In Difficulty Project

Mr. Too introduced himself as the Director of Enrolment Analysis from the department of Enrolment Services. Mr. Too explained that he would provide the Council with background information on the project, and would like to receive feedback and suggestions. Mr. Too described the project as one that is designed to assist students

at Concordia who may have any number of questions relating to the services and departments at the university. Mr. Too then gave a Power Point presentation to the members of CCSL.

Mr. Too finished his presentation by noting that the launch of the project is predicted to happen with the launch of the university's new homepage in mid-March 2011. He acknowledged that it would be rolled out quietly in this manner depending heavily upon word of mouth until it becomes well established, at which point the university may decide to do a major publicity blitz. He indicated that students will not have to access the system through the Portal, as many students may be reluctant to inquire about certain issues if they felt that they were being monitored by the university. Mr. Too added that the system will have a count set up to provide helpful statistics to determine which questions are being asked most frequently and when, which will help the university modify and improve on these services. Mr. Too said that the system will be accessible 24 hours a day, which will assist students who are unable to visit the offices during the department's hours of operation.

A discussion ensued on the project, including several comments from the Council members wondering if contact had been made with those students who had dropped out to find out the reasons why. Mr. Too replied that it is difficult to get feedback from these students because they do not always respond to a follow up. Similarly, many students at Concordia leave for short periods of time, without officially stopping their studies, which makes it difficult to assume that they are or are not returning. It was pointed out that a pro-active approach to the drop-out rate is more effective at catching the students in difficulty before they get to the point where they are unable to continue their studies.

Ms. Pudwell acknowledged the value of the system, however she voiced her concern that it was meant to replace the information desk at the university. Ms. Pudwell felt that having an information desk is vital and should not be replaced entirely by the online system. The Chair said that a comment would be sent to the department that provides that service which is University Communications Services.

Mr. Too concluded by asking for the Council members to send him their feedback and comments on the system. He added that even when the system was launched, changes could be implemented to continue improving the system. Mr. Too was hopeful that if the proper branding was used, the system would become known to every Concordian as a valuable tool to answer a question they may have.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Update on Fall 2010 Special Projects and Pending Projects from 2009-2010

Ms. Stanbra provided the Council members with an update on the fall 2010 Special Projects funding, stating that there will be just over \$40,000 available for the winter 2011 applications. The deadline for applications to be submitted is February 4, 2011 at 5pm. Ms. Stanbra recalled that there were two projects granted funding in the 2009-2010 academic year, whose funding was carried over on an exceptional basis into 2010-2011 by a motion passed at CCSL, due to the fact that they were unable to complete the projects on time. Ms. Stanbra noted the two projects with the approved funding allocated to each: the *CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic* approved for \$21,620; and the *GSA Advocacy Centre* approved for \$8,500. All members of the Council had received the original and the updated applications for these projects for review prior to the meeting. Ms. Stanbra said that Mr. Roddy Doucet of the GSA and Ms. Lucas of the CSU would report to the CCSL on the pending projects.

Mr. Doucet began with the *GSA Advocacy Centre*, providing the CCSL with an updated budget and reported on the progress of the project. He said that the project had been delayed due to restructuring within the GSA. Mr. Doucet noted that graduate students have very particular issues of concern that are different from those held by undergraduate students. He added that to date, all inquiries were being handled by himself or Ms. Chigogidze of the GSA. Mr. Doucet reported that a fee levy campaign would be launched to solidify long-term funding for an advocacy manager. He apologized for the delay in the project and was hopeful that by advertising his own availability at the GSA in the January newsletter, graduate students would benefit more and more from the much needed service.

A discussion ensued with members of the Council voicing concern of the viability of the project moving forward, when it had already been delayed for so much time. It was felt that other projects requesting funding may miss out on available funds as well if extensions were continuously given. Mr. Doucet assured the Council

that the project was already well under way and he did not anticipate any problems claiming the full amount of funding within this fiscal year. He added that a proper transference of knowledge would be guaranteed to assure that the project would continue successfully in the following years. Mr. Doucet was very confident that graduate students would fully support a fee levy to ensure that the Advocacy Centre would be sustained long-term.

Ms. Lucas gave a Power Point presentation to update the CCSL on the *CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic*. She then confirmed that the project would be launched after the reading week at the beginning of March 2011.

Ms. Stanbra asked that since the main expense in the project's budget was for salary, could it be assumed that the approved funding be pro-rated from February until the year-end and Ms. Lucas agreed. The concern was raised that if the funding were not extended once again past the year-end of April 30, 2011, then it would not be established enough to solidify its proper execution. Ms. Lucas could not confirm that a fee levy would be requested in the future to support this project, as the current CSU executive's mandate would be finished at the end of May 2011. Ms. Lucas did ensure that she would strongly advise the incoming CSU executive to include the project in their operating budget for the future. Ms. Sheahan reminded the Council that the university had offered the Legal Information Services (LIS) in the past, however the service had been terminated because the students at the time had resisted any increase in tuition fees. This led to the sector having to reduce many non-salary expenses, as well as eliminate the LIS. The student executives on CCSL at the time had promised that the expenses for a Legal Information Clinic would be integrated into their own operating budgets in the future. Ms. Sheahan brought this to the attention of the Council to give warning that the priorities of future student executives may differ from the current executives' priorities.

After a lengthy discussion, Ms. Stanbra proposed the following motion regarding the *GSA Advocacy Centre*, seconded by Ms. Sheahan:

Be it resolved that the CCSL accept the revised budget for the "GSA Advocacy Centre" as outlined in item 6 of the updated proposal submitted in January 2011 and provide the approved funding of \$8,500 to be claimed within the fiscal year ending April 30, 2011. The funding will not be extended past year-end (April 30, 2011).

The motion passed unanimously.

With regard to the CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic, Ms. Stanbra proposed the following motion, seconded by Ms. Sheahan:

Be it resolved that the approved amount of \$21,620 for the "CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic" be pro-rated for the period of February 1-May 31, 2011, to be claimed during this period. There will be no further extensions beyond this period. Any new proposal for this project would be considered as a new request for consideration in the next cycle of applications for CCSL Special Projects funding in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The motion passed unanimously.

*N.B. This motion carries partial funding into the next fiscal year, and equates to a pro-rated value of \$7,210 (4 month period). As a result the remaining \$14,410 will be applied to the CCSL Winter 2011 applicant pool.

5.2 Reply from Facilities Management Regarding Concerns from October 22, 2010 Presentation

The Chair recalled that at the November 26, 2010 CCSL meeting, Ms. Nazar had voiced her concern with the information provided by Mr. Bolla regarding the Student Centre at the October 22, 2010 CCSL meeting. The Chair reported on behalf of Mr. Bolla that he expressed his regret that he had been misunderstood in his presentation. Mr. Bolla clarified that he had tried to say that any exclusivity agreements that the university held would not be implemented in the student portion of the Student Centre. The management board of the Student Centre would also have the power to review any exclusivity contracts and make decisions on what was being implemented throughout building. Mr. Bolla also responded that the site of the Student Centre had not been confirmed at the time. There had been a probable site, however negotiations were ongoing and other locations were still being considered.

5.3 Promotional Material from Alumni Relations

Ms. Wangechi responded to the concerns raised by Ms. Nazar that students were being targeted by external businesses to advertise their services and products, and that perhaps this had been authorized by the department of Alumni Relations. Ms. Wangechi acknowledged that the department would pass on information to the university alumni and donors, including this promotional material. She assured the Council that Alumni Relations would never provide a student's private information to an outside company and that they always offer the recipients of these messages the opportunity to unsubscribe to any correspondence.

Ms. Nazar worried that by unsubscribing, the students would then be excluded from receiving other important messages sent out by the department. The Chair asked that the suggestion be brought back to Alumni Relations that a student be able to unsubscribe from promotional offers without unsubscribing from other informational messages sent by the department. Ms. Wangechi affirmed that the department was taking the concerns very seriously and were considering how to address the issues.

Ms. Nazar appreciated the follow up, however wished to express her ultimate concern that the university is allowing students to be targeted by credit card companies. She added that it was unclear what the benefits to the university were for agreeing to let credit card companies promote to their students. Ms. Nazar also wished to know who had made the decision at Alumni Relations to start allowing promotional messages to be sent to recent graduates. Ms. Wangechi confirmed that students are given the opportunity to opt out of correspondence being sent to them after graduation at the time of their registration.

6. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Ms. Drew reported that construction would be underway in March 2011 to begin the re-cladding of the GM building. Both Health Services and Financial Aid & Awards would be affected by the construction, however they would remain open for business. While they would be moved temporarily to other locations on the same floor, all services would continue to be offered in both departments.

7. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

8. NEXT MEETING

Due to several conflicts in schedules, the meeting originally set for March 3, 2011 will be changed to March 11, 2011 at 10am. Ms. Broad will send an email to the Council members to confirm the new date and location.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Ms. Sheahan motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Lucas seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.